7:Bach X-5 (1896) 1916 SK7 Guana SK7
Terena

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Data on the Terena Indians of Miranda
[Datos sobre los Indios Terenas de Miranda]

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Data on the Terena Indians of Miranda

J. Bach (1)

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1. The notes that we publish at the present time were handed over to me by the trader, Mr. J. Bach, in the year 1898, before he set out on a new trip to north Mato Grosso. Since that time no word has been had of him, not even in the bosom of his family; there is no doubt that he has perished in the course of his exploration. We believe that we are complying with the wishes of the one who has disappeared by publishing his notes on the little-known natives of Brazil. It has been necessary to correct these notes, which were written hastily, but no change has been made either in

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content or arrangement. We note in passing that the Terena Indians belong, from the linguistic point-of-view to the Guaná Indians, and these in turn are of the Moxo-Aruak linguistic group.

[113]

(See: Max Schmidt, "Guaná," Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, Vol. XXXV, pp. 324-336, 560-604. 1903). (Robert Lehmann-Nitsche.)

M 621 175 [361] /87 cont./ Miranda was founded in the year 1797 by Caetano Pinto de Miranda. The topographical position taken by the Barão de Melgaco is as follows: 20° 14' south latitude, 58° 24' 16" longitude west of Paris.

M [727] [233] Miranda was raised to /the rank/ of villa on May 30, 1857. Completely destroyed in the year 1865 by the Paraguayans, the fields and houses were burned and the inhabitants who could not escape were slain; the cattle, principal wealth of this municipio, was transported, almost completely, to Paraguay, in a number in excess of 300,000 head. Those who returned in the year 1871 found Miranda thus devastated.

G M 233 162 The fields are excellent and are well situated for the pastoral industry. The municipio has about 15,000 inhabitants; the villa of Miranda has 78 houses with tile roofs and a good

M 361 368 number of ranchos, /88/ in addition a church, a cemetery, two public schools for the two sexes, and a private school, "Christovão Columbo," which is divided into two sections, for the two sexes, directed by Sr. Francisco Augusto Ribeiro, and which has received the prize as second-ranking school of the primary grades in the Brazilian Republic.

G M 133 The Miranda River is very small and flows into the Paraguay River; it is navigable by craft of shallow draft; from its mouth

M 505 to the villa of Miranda it is approximately 180 kilometers. The only boat which navigates this river up to Miranda is a small steamer called the Erba, which belongs to Sr. Giasone

G M 132 Rebna, who is the only one who sustains the municipio of Miranda with his trading. The climate is moderate, the temperature indicates on the hottest days 34° C. in the shade,

G M 134 and it goes down as much as five degrees; in the winter it ranges from 22° to 28° C. Miranda has extremely fertile lands for agriculture.

G M 135 There are minerals in great quantities, such as gold, iron, hard coal /carbón de piedra/, rock crystal, marble, malacacheta /malachite?/, which have not as yet been worked.

/88 cont./

162 In the municipio of Miranda there exist several tribes of
103 Indians, the largest of them being that of the Terena Indians, who occupy sundry aldeas, which are: Agachy, Cachoeira, Cachoeirinha, Bocaina, Ipeque, Morinha, and Santa Ana.

433 The Tereña are agriculturalists and are especially engaged
28 in the making of manioc flour; in general they are very in-
323 dustrious, they weave cotton, making nets and other fabrics;
439 from the palm they braid hats, large baskets, sifters, and mats;
[241] from the pita /agave/ and other fibrous plants, the cordage for
[824] weaving bags, in which they transport their products to market; from clay they make platters, dishes, ollas, and many other vessels for domestic use. They exchange their products for beverages and fancy articles. To take their products to market they go in large groups, directed by the cacique.

142 With regard to their stature there are tall, average, and short ones. There are very few tall ones, but they are all
[165] strong and muscular. The men are very ugly for the most part, the women passable, and they attain a very advanced age.
162 The proportion of the two sexes is one-third for the male and two-thirds for the female.

291 Most of them go about completely naked and the most
177 civilized cover themselves with clothing given them by strangers.

847 Birth. They customarily kill the first child, if it is a
648 male, /89/ so that the Christians may not take it as a slave;
562 women are very much valued among them. They accompany
844 the birth of a baby with great fiestas, which always end in
[827] drunkenness.

To give birth the woman goes to the woods, where she makes an excavation about 45 centimeters long by 35 centi-
[847] meters wide, which is lined with palm leaves. In this excava-
[846] tion they give birth, and if the baby is a male they kill it at
[262] once, using the excavation itself as a grave, after which they go to the river to bathe and then submit to a rigorous diet, eating only the heart of the palm called palmita.

/89 cont./

582 Marriage. They do not marry relatives, respecting blood. They customarily marry very young, at whatever age, not
881 considering physical development. At the appearance of menstruation, they hold great fiestas, accompanied by drunken-
[352] ness. They seat the young Indian girl in a highly adorned
[202] hammock, almost totally naked; they cover the young girl only with a tanga or julata, painting her body with several
[534] colors. Above her head they hang a bell, which is rung every
[602] minute or so by an elderly female relative; to the right and
[285] left of the girl sit her parents; the other relatives dance and
595 sing around the girl, who fasts the entire day. Polygamy is permitted among these Indians, there being some who have five, eight, and even more wives, and this depends on the
[586] number of sisters that the first wife has. They get married with considerable facility, breaking it off in the same way
585 and then marrying other women. They only have a fiesta at
527 the first marriage; for this the couple gather together the relatives of both contracting parties, inviting them all to a feast and drinks, a fiesta which ends with songs and dances, and lasts two or three days.

764 Death. When an Indian dies all weep, without any dis-
768 tinction of blood relationship. They customarily bury the dead man with everything that he owned in life, and what they cannot bury they divide among themselves; the animals that were owned by the deceased are exchanged for drinks; at the end they set fire to the house where he lived, and their weeping ends only after the complete disappearance of the goods left by the deceased.

765 The relatives observe mourning in the following way: they
[304] cut off their hair, some pluck out their eyelashes and scratch their faces, with the result that they disfigure themselves completely; this mourning is kept up from five to seven moons.
766 When a cacique dies they also bury him with everything he
622
428

/89 cont./
766 owned, with the exception of his vesture, which is inherited
[622] by his son, who carries on in power. /90/,
[428]

Over the cacique's grave they build a small rancho of palm leaves, as a mark of distinction.

622 Cóchómonety or Cacique. The power of the cacique falls
[852] from fathers to sons. When the first son or daughter of the cacique is born, the latter, a few moments later, breathes into the mouth of the newborn, which signifies that at the age of 15, approximately, he will receive power and will be ordained to caciqueship, following his father in power as soon as the
622 latter dies. When the heirs reach the age of 15, the cacique
527 holds a big fiesta, for this calling together all the caciques
[628] of the other aldeas. Dressed in a simple julata and with his
[302] entire body painted in divers colors, the boy being honored is surrounded by all the invited caciques, who form a closed circle and go around and around the young man, singing for a period of two to three hours.

When this ceremony has ended they go on to eat and drink and the fiesta lasts from two to four days, that is, until the food and drinks are exhausted.

821 Astronomy. Each new moon is a month and 14 moons
[905] are a year. The sun is called paphúyty; the moon calipahú-quethy; the month paphuyty; the stars perphaty; the sky piphâyty; the earth piphéytó.

361 Aldeas. In the municipio of Miranda there exist approxi-
[162] mately from 12,000 to 14,000 Terena Indians and a large
[114] number of aldeas, among which I cite only those that I visited,
[103] the main ones being those called: Agachy, Boquehina, Marro,
Marrinho, Ipeque, Santa Ana, and Caytapé. All the aldeas
[342] show the same type of construction, which is rustic, the houses or ranchos consisting of thin walls of bamboo with a roof of straw or palm leaves. One aldea differs from another only in the greater or lesser number of ranchos.

[342] Agachy Aldea. This aldea has 26 ranchos, the largest be-
[162] ing from 8 to 10 meters long by 3 to 5 meters wide; it is in-
[621] habited by 367 Indians.

/90 cont./

361 Boquehina Aldea. It has 18 ranchos, some from 6 to 8
342 meters long by 3 or 4 wide; it is inhabited by 298 Indians.
162 Marro Aldea. It has 24 ranchos, some from 9 to 10 meters
621 long by 4 to 5 meters wide and other smaller ones; 386 Indians live in it.

Marrinho Aldea. It has 15 ranchos, the largest from 8 to 10 meters long by 2 to 4 meters wide; 257 Indians live there.

Ipéqué Aldea. It has 11 ranchos, some from 5 to 7 meters long /91/ by 2 to 4 meters wide, and others smaller. In it live 246 Indians.

Santa-Ana Aldea. It has 23 ranchos, some from 6 to 10 meters long by 3 to 4 meters wide, with 379 Indians.

Caytapé Aldea. It has 19 ranchos from 8 to 10 meters long by 3 to 5 meters wide, and 315 Indians.

142 Somatic data. The Terena have dark copper-colored skin, ugly flat face, low forehead, black hair, straight and thick, scanty beard, black eyes, a small nose, small mouth, strong, very white teeth, small ears, small hands and feet.

352 The rancho. The interior of the rancho of these Indians
[237] shows rustic bamboo beds covered with the skin of a cow or
of some other wild animal. The hide serves as a mattress,
[415] the pillows are small bags stuffed with straw, there are in addition in the hut several hammocks, several clay pots for water, and some rustic benches, they have no table, their table is the ground.

The kitchen. This is a very simple rancho, or better said
353 a straw roof, some two meters square and a meter and a half
343 high, under which they keep dishes, pots, and other kitchen utensils.

771 Worship. The Terena believe that there is a God in the
825 sky and they believe in the virtues of the tail of the rattlesnake,
787 which has the gift of being able to communicate with the souls
796 in the other world. The only religious fiesta that they celebrate
[92] is the one which corresponds to our Holy Week; it is the passage of the seven stars; this fiesta lasts seven days.

/91 cont./

796 of the seven stars; this fiesta lasts seven days. In all the aldeas, in front of each rancho, they build a straw roof with two slopes two meters square and one meter 80 centimeters in height, supported upon six bamboos. Under this roof they fix a forked bamboo stick from which they hang a tuft of feathers and a gourd. They go in large groups from rancho to rancho, and half an hour at a time, singing and making noise with the gourd. On the fourth day, at dawn, they make a great racket with horns, shout, and set off powder; it is an awesome noise, so awesome that even the animals are frightened, accompanying the music with their cries and moans. The fifth day a masked man appears, with a little bag in his hand, acting clownishly and asking for contributions from all for the great banquet which they will all celebrate.

[534] Accompanied by music and by drums and flutes they celebrate the banquet and dances, which end on the seventh day with great libations.

541 Thadique. This is a very crude hand game, which consists of /92/ fisticuffs between men and between women, formed into two large teams which the caciques select, who also later break them up, since after a brief fight they all file off in good harmony.

526 Horse racing. From a piece of hide they make a horse, which they decorate with feathers and little rags, then mounting this horse as on a hobbyhorse. At about 35 meters from the point of departure they place a hoop and in the middle of this they hang a small dead bird, and they have to strike the bird with a small stiff, very sharp-pointed stick. They start off together, running at full tilt, the loser having to pay one bottle of caña, and the winner receiving two bottles of caña. This fiesta generally lasts two to three days and has no set time, being celebrated in each aldea at a different time.

535 [114] [534] Dances. I attended four different dances and all of them were very harmonious; all of them were accompanied by an orchestra of drums and flutes.

/92 cont./

535 orchestra of drums and flutes. In front of the dancers are lo-
[22] cated two pairs of caciques, who witness the dance. They are accustomed to take part in the dance from the smallest Indian to the oldest; couples join up man with man and woman with woman, the men to the right and the women to the left of the music; when they arrive in front of the caciques, each pair is obliged to salute; the dance goes on in this way for three-
[114] quarters of an hour. I witnessed this dance in Agachy, when 48 couples took part, all of whom danced keeping time well with the music.

In the second dance the pairs of men form an arc in front of the music, but with their backs to it. The couples of women pass through the middle of the arc, and when they come out of it they split up, one to the right and one to the left, reuniting in front of the caciques. In this way the dance went on for half an hour, the men passing once more before the caciques
[114] for the defile. It was also in Agachy that I witnessed this dance.

[114] The third dance, which I saw right there, was similar to the first, but the dancers carried in their hands bunches of flowers and branches of wild plants, with which they saluted when they passed in front of the caciques.

[114] This fourth dance was witnessed by me in the aldea of Santa Ana. In front of the two pairs of caciques and four musicians with their drums and flutes, 22 couples formed up, men and women in equal parts. The dancers carried in their hands a piece of tacuara /a kind of bamboo/ more than one and one-half meters long. In files, the men to the /93/ right and the women to the left, and taking double steps to the rhythm of the music, they alternately struck the tacuaras against one another. This provided a pleasant sight; they did it so well and with such cleverness they seemed to be true artists. This dance lasted an hour and a half, without respite, leaving the dancers, on finishing, completely exhausted.

/93 cont./

/101/ I passed through all of the aldeas mentioned, starting my trip on February 21 and ending it on April 14 of the present year (1896).

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Terena Vocabulary

Man, oyhénó
Woman, sénó
Infant, calihónó
Head, tuty
Eyes, uqué
Nose, guirij
Mouth, pahó
Teeth, ohé

Tongue, nené
Ears, quenó
Neck, docó
Hair, tutijé
Forehead, uhónhó
Arm, daquij
Hand, mohúm
Fingers, toes, coava móhúm
Body, nninho
Chest, chéné
Milk, atuchéné
Heart, omisconé
Liver, apacaná
Lungs, japahytinán
Intestines, ocóhó
Legs, anunzéré
Foot, jévé

Scrotum, ayháquiá
Anus, acicicó
Beard, achenoyhó
Skeleton, hopéthij
Buttock, curócunan
Cemetery, petyayháquiá
God, tupá
Father or cacique, cóchómonetij
House, petij
Walls, yévépetij
Roof, tunucunanpetij
Door, pahápetij
Bed, ypé
Net, tuyty
Ball, uthó
Ollas, chóróná
No, acó
Yes, all right, honaijtij
Small, calij
Water pot or jug, camuchy
Knife, peritau
Necklace, chúrópé
Arrows, chumé
Bow, chequij
Kitchen, oyécótique

/93 cont./

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Masculine member, quaú
Feminine member, syuquaú
Gender /sex/, cotorohytij
Alcohol, cumá
Water, uné
1, aú
2, cahú
3, sjatúlé
4, pacahé
Fire, jucú
Money, tiuquetij /94/
5, sjutohé
6, petequé
7, chipahé
8, chachámé
9, charquihé
10, chatijhómé